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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF FISHERIES

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The United States fishing fleet, which was reduced to critically low levels immediately after the entrance of America into the war, has now been built up to its full pre-war size and is probably more efficient than ever before in its history, Coordinator of Fisheries Harold L. Ickes declared today.

The rebuilding of the fishing fleet has been accomplished by a vigorous construction program sponsored by the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries, which has approved applications for the building of a total of 2,128 fishing craft and has authorized the allotment of materials and equipment required for the construction of the boats.

The fishing fleet normally loses about 275 boats a year through disaster or wearing out of the vessels. In addition to these normal losses, about 700 of the largest and most productive fishing vessels were requisitioned for military service early in the war. Some of these have been returned; others are still in service but their loss now has been more than compensated by new construction.

Of the 2,128 vessels authorized for construction, many are already fishing and all but 85 are scheduled for completion by the end of 1945. The balance are scheduled to come off the ways by the latter part of 1946.

While a few classifications of vessels—notably tuna clippers and large New England trawlers—are still below the pre-war level, the fleet as a whole is larger than before the war and its productive capacity is considerably greater owing to the large proportion of new boats.

Tuna clippers, among the largest and fastest of all fishing boats, were among the last to be replaced because of the large amount of materials and equipment they require, officials of the Coordinator's Office said. A few newly constructed clippers have now entered the fishery, however, and most of the others which have been authorized should be completed during 1945.

The tuna clippers operate on the high seas as far south as Equatorial waters, are equipped for voyages of 4,000 to 6,000 miles, and sometimes remain at sea as long as 90 days. The capacity of their holds is from 125 to 225 tons or more, and they carry elaborate refrigeration equipment for freezing the catch.

About a fourth of the new fishing boats are shrimp trawlers, for service in the leading fishery industry of the South Atlantic and Gulf coast. The addition of more than 500 new trawlers—most of which are already fishing—to the shrimp fleet has greatly increased its efficiency because of the greater range and modern equipment of the new boats.

The construction of draggers and trawlers, which amount to about 13 percent of the total, has been an important factor in boosting the production of fresh fish to meet the unprecedented demands of the present season. Many large otter trawlers, especially from the New England fleet, were requisitioned for war service and have proved so valuable for military purposes that few have been returned. However, the new medium trawlers and draggers have replaced them so effectively that many records for production have been broken on the Atlantic coast this year.

Among other types constructed in large numbers are "combinations," which operate principally on the Pacific coast in the tuna, salmon, shark, and ground-fish fisheries at different seasons; purse seiners, used chiefly for pilchard, mackerel and menhaden; and sea skiffs, small multiple purpose boats used in most areas and many different fisheries.

The numbers and types of vessels authorized for construction in each area are as follows:

Washington and Oregon

7	tuna clippers
26	draggers and trawlers
86	purse seiners
74	trollers
45	gill net boats
95	combinations
62	scows
9	cannery tenders
16	sea skiffs
9	oyster boats
3	shrimp trawlers (for use in Gulf of Mexico)
2	beach seiners
14	miscellaneous
<u>448</u>	

California

53	tuna clippers
8	draggers and trawlers
51	purse seiners
15	trollers
19	sea skiffs
99	combinations
49	market boats
16	bait boats
3	gill net boats
1	lobster boat
48	miscellaneous
<u>362</u>	

Gulf of Mexico

1 dragger
349 shrimp trawlers
7 oyster boats
34 sea skiffs
6 gill net boats
1 beach seiner
1 purse seiner
4 combinations
25 miscellaneous
428

South Carolina, Georgia, east coast Florida

9 draggers and trawlers
3 purse seiners
158 shrimp trawlers
137 sea skiffs
3 gill net boats
8 beach seiners
9 miscellaneous
327

Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina

21 draggers and trawlers
3 purse seiners
43 shrimp trawlers
21 oyster boats
5 sea skiffs
1 pound net boat
1 gill net boat
16 miscellaneous
111

Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island

70 draggers and trawlers
1 shrimp trawler
9 sea skiffs
3 gill net boats
4 pound net boats
7 combinations
1 lobster boat
11 miscellaneous
106

Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine

139 draggers and trawlers
91 lobster boats
3 combinations
1 gill net boat
8 miscellaneous
242

Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi Valley

50 gill net boats
5 pound net boats
3 scows
8 miscellaneous
66

Alaska

4 purse seiners
3 trawlers
4 trollers
3 combinations
9 sea skiffs
5 scows
3 cannery tenders
7 miscellaneous
38

Summary by types of vessels, all areas

60 tuna clippers
277 draggers and trawlers
148 purse seiners
554 shrimp trawlers
229 sea skiffs
112 gill net boats
211 combinations
93 trollers
49 market boats
16 bait boats
11 beach seiners
10 pound net boats
93 lobster boats
37 oyster boats
70 scows
12 cannery tenders
146 miscellaneous
2,128

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